

Approved For Release 2004/04/15 : CIA-RDP82-00457R004700200004-1

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

25X1A

COUNTRY USSR (Moscow Oblast)

DATE DISTR. 3 May 1950

SUBJECT Rocket-Driven Aircraft Observed at the
Moscow-Khimki Airfield

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE
ACQUIREDNO. OF ENCLS. 2
(LISTED BELOW)

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DATE OF
INFO.SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

25X1X

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1. The airfield was on the western town border of Khimki (37°26'E/55°53'N), Moscow Oblast, northeast of the Moscow-Leningrad railroad line (see Annex 1).
2. Two rocket-driven aircraft were stationed at the field in June/July 1948 and in June/July 1949. The planes were parked in front of or inside the hangars on the eastern edge of the field and took off for test flights three or four times daily. The take-off was effected by means of the propeller after a run of about 60 to 70 meters. At an altitude of about 20 meters, a jet of fire, first yellow then changing to red, which was about as long as the plane, emanated for four or five seconds from the bottom of the fuselage far behind the trailing edge of the wings. A loud hooting noise like that of an air raid siren, however louder than the noise at the V-2 testing station, was heard. The jet of fire was replaced by a quickly vanishing black smoke plume, as long as the plane. During the emanation of fire the plane quickly gained in speed, soon reaching an altitude of 600 to 700 meters. It climbed considerably faster and steeper than was observed with German planes during the war. Its speed was considerably faster than that of the Me-109. At every test flight the rocket propulsion was put into operation only once. The plane stayed in the air for about 20 to 30 minutes and then slowly descended for landing. Flying at a low speed it touched the ground and rolled for about 30 meters. It then taxied to the hangar with the propeller in operation. Sometimes the rocket propulsion failed to work and only a black cloud emanated from the underside of the fuselage. In this case the plane had to land.
3. Description of the rocket-driven plane (see also sketch 2):
 - a. Propulsion: Engine with two-bladed propeller, presumably in-line engine for low speed. Rocket in fuselage not visible, exhaust set far aft of trailing edge of wings, almost horizontal to fuselage, slightly slanting downward, forward of rear third section of fuselage.
 - b. Wings: Mid-wing monoplanes, not swept back or dihedral, slightly cranked in outer third section, leading edge tapering to the rear, trailing edge apparently straight, tips rounded off, width at fuselage about 1½ meters, span about 3½ meters.

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c. Tail unit: Single rudder assembly, about 1 meter high, protruding beyond tail of fuselage, trailing edge straight, leading edge bent to the fore. Elevator assembly set in about mid-height of rudder assembly, trailing edge apparently straight, leading edge tapering to the rear, not swept back, dihedral, or cranked.

d. Landing gear: Main landing gear set under fuselage at the end of the front third, beginning about in line with leading edge of wings, sloping to the fore, single-tired, retracting rearward. No nose wheel.

e. Fuselage: Torpedo-shaped, rounded nose, pointed tail, somewhat thicker at wing level, sides seem to be flat when seen from the front, length 7 to 8 meters, one third of length forward of wings, two thirds aft of wings. Single-seat, tortoise-shaped cockpit set far to the fore, front section higher than rear section, protruding beyond leading edge of wings, trailing edge about as far as mid-wing, glazed.

f. Paint and marking: Dark green; a Soviet star at bottom side of each wing, at both sides of fuselage aft of wings, and at both sides of rudder assembly above the elevator assembly. The Russian letters "СССР" with a figure were painted aft of the Soviet star.

g. Additional features: A cigar-shaped body, similar to a mortar shell, was carried by two struts fitted to the cockpit canopy. Estimated diameter about 25 cm, highest point about 1½ meters above the fuselage, length about 1.8 meter slightly protruding over leading and trailing edges of cockpit, a window each, about eight inches wide, at both sides.

h. Length and span of plane: 7 to 8 meters.

4. Additional flying activity: Four to five four-engine planes made a few flights once a week in the summer months. Five to six bi-planes from which individual parachute jumps were practiced took off every day.
5. All fliers, including many women, wore only civilian clothes.

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Comment:

a. Many valuable reports on the Moscow-Khimki V-weapons plant were received but contained only little detailed information on flying with rocket-driven planes or planes equipped with jets.

b. Report describes in detail test flights with rocket engines. A conventional fighter was apparently used as a carrier plane. The purpose of the cigar-shaped body above the cockpit is not known. The statement that the flying time from take-off to landing was from 20 to 30 minutes is noteworthy. From this fact it can be assumed that the Soviet development apparently did not much exceed the operating time of the former Walter power plant equipped with a "Marschhofen", i.e. a special combustion chamber for idling speed and an operating time of 14 minutes.

2. Annexes : 1. Airfield of Moscow-Khimki.

2. Rocket-driven Aircraft Observed at the Moscow-Khimki Airfield.

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